

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 QUITO 000983

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/28/2015

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PINR](#) [EC](#)

SUBJECT: BIO INFO FOR NEW GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS: PART 3

REF: QUITO 911

Classified By: Ambassador Kristie A. Kenney, Reason 1.4 (b&d)

1. (U) Summary: Pablo Rizzo was named Minister of Agriculture on April 29. President Palacio has yet to name Ministers of Labor and Energy. Below is biographical information for the following new Cabinet members and government officials: First Lady Maria Beatriz Paret de Palacio, Vice FM Marcelo Fernandez de Cordova, Vice Minister of Government Juan Carlos Guzman, Minister of Environment Anita Alban, Secretary of Public Administration Luis Herreria Bonnet, Minister of Education Consuelo Yanez Cossio, Minister of Tourism Maria Isabel Salvador Crespo, SRI Director Elsa De Mena, and additional information for FM Antonio Parra Gil. More information on recently-named government officials will follow septel. End Summary.

First Lady

2. (C) Maria Beatriz Paret de Palacio, who has assumed the leadership of the National Institute for the Child and Family (INNFA), is a native of Guayaquil. She attended primary school, high school and college in San Diego and Boston. She speaks Spanish and excellent English. Paret had been living in Miami for the past eight years. She is separated from the President, though not legally. Palacio is rumored to have a lady friend in Guayaquil.

3. (C) Paret was born on April 18, 1948 and married on September 5, 1969. The presidential couple has four children: Dr. Ana Maria Palacio de Tamariz (34), Llinka Maria Palacio de Zambrano (32), Alfredo Inti Palacio (30), and Carola Maria Palacio (22). All of the children grew up in the US; Alfredo Jr. has returned to Ecuador to assist his father for the coming year. The son and one daughter are doctors. Another daughter is married to Dr. Leonardo Tamariz, a former Consul of Ecuador to Miami.

Additional Info on the Foreign Minister

4. (U) Antonio Parra Gil holds a J.D. from the University of Salamanca in Spain. He has also served as a magistrate in the Guayas province electoral tribunal. Other previous positions include professor of territorial law in the State University of Guayaquil; professor specializing in the Rio de Janeiro Protocol and international organizations in the University of Guayaquil's School of Diplomacy; lawyer at the Central Bank of Ecuador; lawyer at the National Credit Bank; lawyer, director, vice president and president of Amazonas Bank (owned by the Parra family). He is a member of the Guayaquil's Hispanic Cultural Institute.

Vice Foreign Minister

5. (C) Marcelo Fernandez de Cordova is a career diplomat who joined the Foreign Service in 1966. His first tour was as consul in San Diego (1971). He also served as commercial counselor, then minister counselor in Lima (1975-80), broken up by two years as alternate representative to the OAS (1977-78). Fernandez returned to Ecuador early from his OAS mission because his wife's brother was kidnapped by a Colombian guerrilla group and later killed. Fernandez previously served as Vice Foreign Minister in 1995 in the Duran Ballen government. Within the MFA, he has held the positions of Chief of Staff (1972 and 1983), Chief of the Legal Department (1972), and Assistant Chief of Protocol (1973). He reportedly only briefly served as Chief of Protocol in early 1985, getting re-assigned after upsetting President Leon Febres Cordero with his mishandling of a state visit to Brazil.

6. (C) Fernandez served as Ambassador to Sweden with accreditation for Denmark, Norway, and Finland (1985-89), Bulgaria (1989-92), Italy (one year), Venezuela (five years), and the Vatican (until February 2005). Fernandez began the Ecuador-Peru peace negotiations in Brazil and has written a book about the experience.

7. (C) Fernandez has a law degree from Quito's Catholic University and taught international law there. He also has a bachelor's degree from the same university in public and social science. He comes from a politically conservative

family. Fernandez was born in Quito on December 8, 1941. He speaks English and Italian. Fernandez was a squash partner of previous US Ambassador Newell. Previous Embassy officers found him easy to get along with and generally pro-US. They found him intelligent, but lacking organizational and managerial skills.

18. (C) Fernandez is married to Maria Elena Briz and has two children. A daughter, born in San Diego, is an architect living in Quito and married to businessman Dr. Gustavo Arteta. A son is an economist working for the UN in Geneva.

Vice Minister of Government

19. (U) Juan Carlos Guzman was born in Guayaquil in 1950. He holds a law degree. He held the position of director at the Ministry of Finance. He previously served as Vice Minister of Social Welfare as well as of the Finance Ministry. He has been an advisor to the Congress. He has worked in the Guayas Electoral Tribunal.

Minister of Environment

10. (C) Anita Alban is a lawyer by profession and previously was the director of Ecuador's Nature Foundation in Guayaquil. According to Embassy sources, Alban was named MOE because of her close ties to Lourdes Luque, a former MOE who stepped down after corruption charges. Luque is close to President Palacio's sister, and while Palacio could not give the job directly to Luque because of outstanding allegations, Alban is beholden to Luque for her position. Alban has her own detractors; Embassy contacts have charged that Alban has no environmental expertise, is inept, and possibly corrupt. She allegedly left the Nature Foundation \$1 million in debt. Her father is retired from the Ecuadorian Navy.

Secretary of Public Administration

SIPDIS

11. (U) Luis Herreria Bonnet studied law at the University of Guayaquil. He was president of the Guayaquil Superior Court and a magistrate on the Supreme Court. Herreria was Vice Minister of Fishing under the Borja government. He is a member of the Luso-Hispanic judicial organization.

Minister of Education

12. (U) Dr. Consuelo Yanez Cossio is considered a specialist in bilingual education. She received her doctorate in linguistics from Quito's Catholic University, a masters in linguistics from Colorado State University, and a bachelor's degree in education from Quito's Catholic University. She is the president of the education corporation Macac, and rector of the College and Institute of Superior Intercultural Bilingual Pedagogy Macac. She is a full-time professor of English as a second language at Quito's Catholic University, as well as director of the University's English as a Second Language Department and of its Language and Linguistics Institute. Dr. Yanez created the degree program in Quichua linguistics at the university. She has written several books on intercultural bilingual education, as well as literary works and articles. She is a corresponding member of the Ecuadorian Language Academy. Yanez speaks Spanish, English, French, Quichua, and Huaorani. Dr. Yanez is 66 years old and a native of Quito.

13. (U) On April 26, Ministry of Education workers took over the Ministry's buildings to prevent Yanez from taking office, demanding that President Palacio replace her with someone without prior links to the Ministry. One worker told press that Yanez had been an advisor to previous Ministers and had a reputation for mistreatment of employees.

Minister of Tourism

14. (U) Maria Isabel Salvador Crespo has served as assistant to the director of the Commission on Church Participation in Development at the World Council of Churches in Geneva. She has also been a teacher of French at Quito's Alliance Francaise. She worked as an airport agent for Air France in Quito and was general manager for the air transport company SORCIAIR. Ms. Salvador studied law at Quito's Catholic University (1980-1984). She also studied at Geneva University's School of French Language and Civilization (1985-1988) and at Quito's San Francisco University's College of Continuing Education (1998-1999).

15. (U) Salvador has served as president and treasurer of the Fund for Tourism Promotion in Ecuador, vice president of Pichincha's Provincial Chamber of Tourism, director of the

Federation of Tourism Company Executives, president of the Association of Tourism Company Executives, and member of the board of the Franco-Ecuadorian Chamber of Industry and Commerce. Ms. Crespo was born in Quito and is 43 years old. She speaks Spanish, English, French, and Italian.

Internal Revenue Service Director

16. (C) President Palacio returned Elsa Romo-Leroux De Mena to her previous post as director of Ecuador's Internal Revenue Service (SRI). De Mena had been removed by Gutierrez in December 2004, reportedly as one of banana magnate Alvaro Noboa's conditions for his party (PRIAN) joining the pro-Gutierrez alliance in Congress. Noboa is rumored to owe millions to the SRI. De Mena has six years previous experience working at the SRI and a reputation for integrity. Previously, in her position as director of the SRI, Mena dramatically improved tax collection in Ecuador. De Mena modernized the institution, introducing advanced information systems and databases to track income for tax purposes.

17. (C) Mena received an economics degree from Quito's Catholic University in 1975 and worked for many years at the National Financial Corporation (CFN), a state bank that serves as an intermediary between external providers of soft loans for development purposes and the domestic banking sector. She went from a credit analyst position to Chief of Planning and Financial Management. She left the CFN in 1989 to become a consultant specializing in improving state enterprise's financial performance. She worked from 1997-98 at National Modernization Council. She does not speak English.
KENNEY